

CHARLES W. DENT
15TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3815

June 25, 2013

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The Very Reverend Father Anthony G. Sabbagh
St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
1011 Catasauqua Avenue
Allentown, PA 18102-5001

Father Anthony

Dear Very Reverend Father Sabbagh,

At this time of conflict and uncertainty in Syria, I commend you on the leadership and compassion you have demonstrated toward your parishioners and the larger Christian Syrian community.

Since our meeting in my Allentown office on 17 June 2013, I have been in direct communication with U.S. Ambassador to the Syrian Arab Republic Robert Ford. During the course of my conversation with Ambassador Ford, I discussed our meeting and your grave concerns for the two abducted Orthodox Christian Archbishops. Ambassador Ford is deeply committed to the safety and release of Metropolitan Boulos Yazigi, the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Aleppo, and Metropolitan Yohanna Ibrahim, the Syriac Archbishop of Aleppo. He also conveyed his sympathies for the murder of Fatha' Allah Kabbound, a deacon in the Syriac Orthodox Church, who was serving as the Archbishops' driver at the time of their abduction.

Ambassador Ford and I also discussed the issue of remittances. In these difficult times, I fully recognize the need to provide financial support to family members in Syria. The Ambassador informed me that Executive Order 13528, signed by President Barack Obama on 17 August 2011, includes an exemption under General License No. 6 authorizing U.S. registered financial institutions the ability to transfer funds to individuals in Syria. Included with this letter is a copy of General License No. 6 signed by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). As your parishioners encounter challenges in transferring funds, they may provide this documentation to their financial institution or call OFAC's hotline (202) 622-2480. It is important to have all relevant information on the intended transaction, including the names of the financial institutions in the U.S. and Syria.

I have asked Ambassador Ford his availability to speak with you to further discuss these issues and any additional concerns. I encourage you to contact my chief of staff George McElwee at your earliest convenience, (202) 225-6411. He will assist in scheduling a time for you to speak with the Ambassador. In the meantime, I will continue my communication with the

Ambassador and the appropriate staff of the U.S. State Department and will relay any relevant updates.

Please express my deepest sympathies and concern to your parishioners about the abduction of Archbishops Yzigi and Ibrahim. I pray for their well-being and immediate release.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress

CC: Ambassador Robert Stephen Ford, U.S. Ambassador to the Syrian Arabic Republic
Reverend Moufid Khoury, Associate Arabic Ministry, First Presbyterian Church of Allentown

Enclosure

CWD/gm



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

Office of Foreign Assets Control

GENERAL LICENSE NO. 6

Noncommercial, Personal Remittances Authorized

(a) (1) U.S. depository institutions, U.S. registered brokers or dealers in securities, and U.S. registered money transmitters are authorized to process transfers of funds to or from Syria or for or on behalf of an individual ordinarily resident in Syria in cases in which the transfer involves a noncommercial, personal remittance, provided the transfer is not by, to, or through the Government of Syria or any other person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to Executive Order 13338 of May 11, 2004, Executive Order 13399 of April 25, 2006, Executive Order 13460 of February 13, 2008, Executive Order 13572 of April 29, 2011, Executive Order 13573 of May 18, 2011, or Executive Order ____ of August 18, 2011.¹

(2) Noncommercial, personal remittances do not include (i) charitable donations of funds to or for the benefit of any entity or (ii) funds transfers for use in supporting or operating a business.

(b) The transferring institutions identified in paragraph (a) of this general license may rely on the originator of a funds transfer with regard to compliance with paragraph (a), provided that the transferring institution does not know or have reason to know that the funds transfer is not in compliance with paragraph (a).

Barbara C. Hammerle
Acting Director
Office of Foreign Assets Control

Dated: August 18, 2011

¹ "Blocking Property of the Government of Syria and Prohibiting Certain Transactions with Respect to Syria"